



# AERizona View

SEPTEMBER 2005

ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION & REHABILITATION OF THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED—ARIZONA CHAPTER

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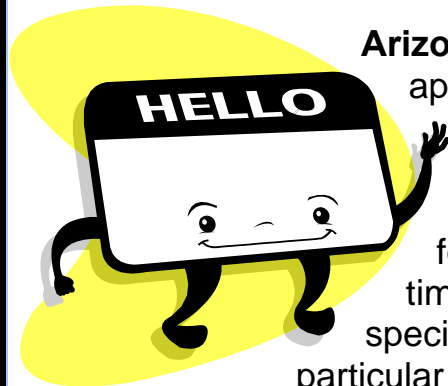
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### INSERTS

- *AZ AER Fall Conference Program*
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## President's Message



Arizona AER's fall conference is fast approaching! This year's November 17th and 18th event will provide members and other Arizona folks with a wide variety of opportunities. The board has focused especially hard on providing timely and relevant sessions to as many special interest groups as possible. Of

particular interest to our early childhood folks will be Neuro-Ophthalmologist Mark Borchert, national expert on Optic Nerve Hypoplasia and Septo-Optic Dysplasia. Members from all fields will benefit greatly from learning about digital portfolios from Canadian resident Troy LaPlante.

Friday sessions will interchange with VRATE (Vision Rehabilitation and Technology Expo) activities, including wisdom from Governor Janet Napolitano. VRATE exhibitors will be ready to share their wares with AER conference participants throughout Friday.

If those aren't reason enough to take time out of your busy schedules, here's another: AZ AER is YOUR organization. It is your voice, your backbone, your support. It is the person sitting next to you during the Margaret Bluhm Awards, and the dog guide resting his head on your foot. It is the early childhood specialist, the rehab counselor, the O&M specialist, the TVI, the deaf-blind specialist, the rehabilitation teacher, the university professor, the low vision therapist, the technology expert, the parent, the friend.

Did you get the hint? Without YOU, there is no AER! Please plan to attend this exciting two days of events with your friends and colleagues. See you there!

*Dorinda*

LOOKING  
AHEAD!

AZ AER ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE &  
VRATE

Phoenix Civic  
Plaza

<http://www.ed.arizona.edu/azaer/>  
[www.vrate.org](http://www.vrate.org)

Nov 17-18, 2005

GETTING IN  
TOUCH WITH  
LITERACY

Denver, CO

December 1-3, 2005  
[www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org](http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org)

SKI FOR LIGHT  
Granby, CO

Jan 29-Feb 5, 2006

<http://www.sfl.org>

CTEVH

Anaheim, CA

March 10-12, 2006

<http://www.ctevh.org/>

AER

INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE

Snowbird, UT

July 13-19, 2006

[www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)

IMC 12

Hong Kong

Nov 27-Dec 1, 2006

<http://www.hksb.org.hk/>

## **WE'VE BĒEN TO LONDON: Report on Vision 2005!**

*Jacki Daniels TVI ~ The Foundation for Blind Children*

First, thanks to Arizona AER and the professional grant program for helping me attend the Vision 2005 Conference in London in April 2005! With over 65 countries and 1200+ attendees, this conference was huge! It is promoted as the "world's premier event on low vision and sight loss". The conference was held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Center in Westminster, London, United Kingdom, hosted by RNIB and organized by the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLLR).

Monday offered 28 presenters divided under eleven different "themes" and four keynote speakers, and that was just from 11:00 to 3:00! Tuesday, Sandra Stirnweis and I presented on our "Dynamics of Healthy Integration Workshop". We were in a group of five total presenters during a 1½ hour time frame. You talk really fast, give highlights, and share your contact information for further questions.

Here are highlights from a few of the sessions I attended:

- Myopia is prevalent in Hong Kong 70% to 25% in the United States.
- Dr. Eleanor Faye considers contrast sensitivity more important than visual acuity and now uses the MARS Letter contrast Sensitivity Test. In her studies, she found patients with congenital eye diseases to have above average contrast sensitivity for their acuity, and all preferred optical magnification over the CCTV.
- Dr. August Colenbrander discussed the need for better assessment tools and described functional vision as how the person performs, and visual function as how the eye performs. He discussed terminology and suggested "many more people are blinded by definition than any other cause". The International Council of Ophthalmologists suggests using the term "blindness" for those who require mainly vision substitution and "low vision" for those who require vision enhancement.
- Dr. Audrey Smith explained her technique of including photos in functional vision assessment reports. Including photos and a concise sentence under each is a great way to explain a person's vision to others and makes it easy to understand – functional not clinical.
- Japan is developing more outreach programs and integrating their students with visual impairment in their home schools; they also have an infant outreach for children birth to two-years-old. Clients in Japan's Rehabilitation and Vocational Centers are taught acupuncture and massage.
- The crowning moment of the conference was the last keynote, with Ray Kurzweil as a hologram beamed from his New York office to our stage in London. WOW! Truly remarkable, as was the speech!

I did some sightseeing, Madame Trousseau's wax museum and shopping – of course! Ask Sandra or me about our bus ride one morning – too funny!

RESERVE  
YOUR ROOM  
AT THE  
RAMADA INN!

AZ AER Fall  
Conference 2005!  
We are  
consolidating  
efforts with  
VRATE on  
November 17-18,  
2005! Two  
dynamite  
conferences for  
the price of one!

Accommodations  
are at the  
Ramada Inn  
Downtown  
Phoenix at  
401 N. 1st Street  
Phoenix, AZ  
85004  
1-800-272-6232  
Reservations  
made BEFORE  
October 16<sup>th</sup> are  
\$72.00 per night  
(single & double  
occupancy).  
Reservations  
made AFTER  
October 16<sup>th</sup> are  
\$119 per night.  
There is a \$10  
charge for each  
additional person  
over double  
occupancy. There  
are two  
wheelchair  
accessible rooms.  
Mention AER  
Room Block!

## LESSONS FROM MY STUDENTS: Who's Really the Teacher Here?

*Patty Arnold CLVT, CVRT ~ ACBVI*

*Excerpted and reprinted from the ACB Newsletter Fore-Sight ~ Summer 2001*

After 16+ years in the field of Blind Rehabilitation, I find myself in the interesting position of being considered by some a veteran in the field, albeit nowhere near as experienced or wise as some of my colleagues! I'm grateful for all I've learned, and in addition, I'm sure they'd agree that one of the most exciting and gratifying places to grow as a person and professional is from... you guessed it, our students. So here are a few of my reflections as a tribute to all my "teachers"; that is to say, my students.

Attitude is the biggest barrier or the biggest booster to my happiness. I recall one student who was displeased with the way I was teaching him. Instead of coming to me directly to talk about it, he went to my supervisor, one of my pet peeves. I remember slowing my thoughts down and reading a poem about attitude that I keep posted on my wall as a reminder in just such cases. I was then able to think more rationally, and the student, my supervisor and I sat down together. My supervisor never had to say a word; we worked things out on our own!

A smile can make a huge difference in another person's day. One day I was having one of those hectic days, was worn and just felt like going home. Of course, I didn't. I had students waiting to see me, so I pressed on. My next student greeted me at the door with a huge welcome, and my energy level skyrocketed! Then she began to talk about her feelings about being blind and feeling useless. I listened, but also told her what a difference she had already made in my day, and we proceeded to talk about the things she wanted to be able to do, and how she could learn to do them. I was hoping she really understood the difference she had made.

Working can be FUN! I love getting a student with a sense of humor. It helps me to have a sense of humor about myself. Kathy (yes, it's her real name; she's given me permission to use it) laughs with me when I make a mistake or mix up my words. We're working on computer instruction, and no matter how hard I try, I can't remember every single keystroke all the time. But my students have shown me the meaning of lightening up, going with the flow, and having a good time. Learning often comes easier when I do.

Forgiveness is vital. Joan (not her real name this time) and I had a great rapport. One day, however, I was dealing with a problem with hives. If you've never had this kind of severe itching problem, feel very lucky. It changed my usually patient personality, so I actually snapped at Joan for no reason. She looked at me with a puzzled look and asked, "You're not feeling very well are you?" She could have snapped back and gotten defensive, but she forgave me. Wow, that was a powerful lesson!

## GETTING IN TOUCH WITH LITERACY!

The Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference is held every two years. This topical conference focuses exclusively on issues related to literacy for individuals with visual impairment. The theme of this year's literacy conference is "Living Literacy". Arizonans Jane Erin and Jean Murphy are among the presenters!

GITWL 2005 will convene in downtown Denver from Dec 1-4, 2005. Visit <http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/index.htm> for all related information!

It's not what I don't have that counts, but what I do have.

I have seen many students who were feeling distraught over their situation with their changing vision, a natural reaction, of course. When a student gets to the point where they are feeling good about who they are and what they can do, and not feeling bad constantly about the things they haven't yet mastered, I am truly inspired. Recently, when I went through a serious illness, many times I thought back to students who were having a difficult time (from some life difficulty; not necessarily related to vision), but who never gave up. This kept me from giving up, and helped me to think of what I do have to be grateful for.

Are these all the lessons I've learned? No, there's plenty more. Will I learn more? You bet. It's part of what enriches me as a person, and keeps that old "Mr. Burnout" from taking over my life. Thank you to all my students for teaching me!

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### **Full Speed Ahead at the UofA!**

*Dr. Penny Rosenblum ~ University of Arizona*

The UofA Vision Program is steaming along at breakneck speed as we begin the 2005-06 academic year. For the first time in quite awhile, Drs. Topor, Rosenblum and Stewart are employed 100% time preparing professionals in visual impairment. This is because we have both federal and state funding for TVIs and O&Ms. Rest assured, we're putting your federal and state tax dollars to good use. Our current student groups include:

- Ten individuals (8 Navajos, 1 Hopi and 1 Anglo) who are in their second course in the TVI sequence. The first course was in Chinle, and the current course, Low Vision with Dr. Topor, is meeting in Ganado.
- Twelve individuals (2 of whom are working as TVIs already) met for the first weekend of their first course with Dr. Rosenblum at FBC on September 9-10. These students are part of our new Phoenix group of approximately 20 students.
- Five full-time on campus TVI students, along with approximately ten part-time students, are taking TVI courses. One of our new students is from Vietnam.
- Six full-time O&M students are walking the streets of Tucson with Dr. Stewart.
- Six students spent the summer in Flagstaff under blindfold as part of a 3-year program to prepare O&Ms who are practicing TVIs.

Three full-time doctoral students, Beth Harris (GA), Holly Lawson (Tucson), and Eric Sticken (NC), began their studies with us. These individuals are 3 of 15 people funded by the National Center for Leadership in Visual

## WHAT IS IMC?

IMC stands for International Mobility Conference! IMC convenes every three years. The first IMC was held in Frankfurt in 1979. Subsequent conferences have been held in such far off locales as Paris, Jerusalem, and most recently, *Stellenbosch, South Africa!*

IMC 12 is set to convene Nov 27 – Dec 1, 2006, in Hong Kong, China! Post conference tours will take participants throughout China.

The Hong Kong Society for the Blind is hosting IMC 12 at Hong Kong's Langham Place Hotel. The Call for Papers, tentative program and information related to registration, travel and accommodations can be found at <http://www.hksb.org.hk/>

Impairment project. They join Dr. Erin's five doctoral students who are in various stages of their climb up the doctoral mountain. These individuals are Cheryl Hannan, Keri Lohmeier, Dave Petrovay, Lisa Serino and Kathy Zwald.

Though it's only fall of 2005, it's not too early to let people know that we are accepting applications for the 2006-07 academic year. Please contact Jane Erin for the TVI program ([jerin@u.arizona.edu](mailto:jerin@u.arizona.edu), 520-621-0945) and Ian Stewart for the O&M program ([istewart@u.arizona.edu](mailto:istewart@u.arizona.edu), 520-621-3887). In June 2006, we will be offering the Introduction to Visual Impairment and Deafblindness and Orientation & Mobility for Classroom Teachers classes.

Each semester, so many of you support our program! We have people who are allowing students to job shadow them and are working with O&P and interns placed throughout the state. Many of you are speaking in classes and serving on panels. Without your support, we would not be able to have such depth to our program. THANK YOU!!!!

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## An Idea To Build Attending

*Deb Herrmann ~ FBC*

Kris Rouse, PT, Mimi Pruniski, OT and Jeanne Neumann, VI Preschool Teacher, have developed an idea with an Eagle Scout that we want to share with you! The intended purpose was to create a movement modulation chair. Either a TumbleForm or cube chair placed on this box chair device allows the teacher flexibility in providing a reduction of both visual stimulus and auditory stimulus. This self-contained study area enables students to focus on tasks. The movement modulation chair has wheels with locks so that it can be moved in the room. The two arm sides have hinges so that either side can be dropped as needed.

What happens with this arrangement is that we have found students to be more relaxed and attentive as their peripheral vision is not constantly stimulated. How nice for the student to relax into their chair and expend energy on attending and not fright/flight!! Additionally, students have been more attentive, as the environmental stimuli are reduced and the sound is decreased. As a teacher sees that the student is ready for more input, one or both sides can be dropped down. As Jeanne states, "It's like a little nest."

If you have resources that you could utilize to construct one of these devices, we have a set of instructions from the Eagle Scout. Contact Jeanne Neumann at [jneumann@the-fbc.org](mailto:jneumann@the-fbc.org) or Deb Herrmann at [dherrmann@the-fbc.org](mailto:dherrmann@the-fbc.org) or call the Cooperative Preschool for the Visually Impaired at 602-331-1470.

NCLVI  
DOCTORAL  
FELLOWSHIPS!

The Pennsylvania College of Optometry announces the National Center for Leadership in Visual Impairment (NCLVI) fellowship competition for doctoral study beginning Fall 2006. NCLVI will provide full tuition and annual living stipend to NCLVI Fellows for up to four years of study. Potential applicants must be new doctoral study applicants not currently enrolled in a doctoral program. University of AZ is one of the participating consortium universities.

The deadline for fellowship applications is February 3, 2006. Go to <http://www.pco.edu/nclvi.htm>

## Scholarship Pays!

Arizona AER proudly awards two Student Merit Scholarships to students with visual impairment! Our recipients are **Paul Ruffner** of Prescott and **Sydney Freedman** of Scottsdale! Read what the TVIs who nominated them had to share:



As his academic record demonstrates, **Paul** has been an excellent “A” student. He has always loved to learn and has a great work ethic. He completed three Advanced Placement classes in World History, Spanish and English and received top scores on the AP exams, earning him college credit in each area. Paul has performed well in all academic areas, but excels in history, government and foreign language, allowing him to become the state champion in the National Geography Bee, participate in Mock Trial competitions, and act as the Prescott High School representative to Boys’ State (where he returned this past summer as a counselor). Paul is a brilliant musician, playing piano since the age of three, and more recently saxophone, in the Prescott High School jazz band and in small jazz combos. He is well-liked, socially adept, a good conversationalist, with a good sense of humor. His most recent achievement was being voted the “Student with the Loudest Laugh” by his graduating class!

*Christine Powers ~ TVI*

**Sydney** has always been a self-motivated, hard-working student. She has made the most of her talents, receiving academic honors and scholarships while being a member of the National Honor Society, Society of Women Scholars and Spanish Honorary Society. Her beautiful soprano voice has brought great pleasure to audiences, and she won a variety of music awards along with singer in the All-State High School Choir her senior year. Sydney has enjoyed participating in sports camps, tandem bike rides, and church activities along with being an active member of weekend and summer programs at the Foundation for Blind Children. She has shared her gifts and talents as a mentor to younger students or as a tutor to her peers. Sydney is attending St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, where I’m sure she will continue to grow, achieve and share.

*Ken Kalina ~ TVI*

### *A note from your Editor:*

It’s never too early to begin considering nominations for the AZ AER Student Merit Scholarship 2006! Scholarships are awarded in the amount of \$500.00. High school seniors and those who are already in university and vocational preparation programs are eligible. The scholarship application will be inserted in AERizona View in February 2006. It is also posted at the AZ AER website and will be updated upon the election of a new secretary in November.

FREE  
SEMINARS FOR  
O&M  
INSTRUCTORS!

Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc. continues to foster relationships with O&M Specialists by conducting expense-free seminars. Seminars are held March – October in California and Oregon.

Participants work with actual dog guides, analyze orientation problems, and find solutions for a guide dog team. Evaluating applicants for dog guide training is also part of the curriculum. CEUs may be earned upon completion. Visit [www.guidedogs.com/seminars.html](http://www.guidedogs.com/seminars.html).

## AZ AER Classified Ads

**RSA:** The Rehabilitation Services Administration, Services for the Blind, has vacancies for full-time itinerant Certified O&M and RT Specialists serving the Phoenix area and surrounding counties. The positions involve teaching adults who are either Vocational Rehabilitation or Independent Living clients. Full-time positions have competitive salary and benefits. Qualified O&M and RT Specialists may inquire or apply by calling Supervisor Joan Ellis, Rehabilitation Instructional Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired, at 602-266-9286 X7303 or emailing [jellis@azdes.gov](mailto:jellis@azdes.gov). You can post your resume at [azstatejobs.gov](http://azstatejobs.gov).



**SAAVI:** The Southern Arizona Association for the Visually Impaired is recruiting for an Assistive Technology Specialist to work directly with blind and visually impaired consumers providing individual and group assistive technology training. Go to [www.saavi.us](http://www.saavi.us) for complete job summary and qualifications. Submit résumé to Director Michael Gordon at [mgordon@saavi.us](mailto:mgordon@saavi.us).

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### Set Your Sites

<http://www.nhest.org/> Natural History, Education, Science & Technology: Contains a link to SCIENCE WITHOUT SIGHT: Non-visual approaches to science and technology

<http://www.jasonbryn.com/> Visually impaired Tucson tandem cyclist Jason Bryn's website

<http://www.michaelbach.de/ot/> 57 optical illusions and visual phenomena

<http://www.hadley.edu/> Hadley School for the Blind ~ Now offering a tuition-free online course called "Blindness Basics."

<http://www.ad-awards.com/inc/video.swf?id=104> 15 second ad currently airing in France for Disability Awareness, entitled "The world is harder when it is not conceived for you."

<http://www.usaba.org/> Newly designed website of the US Association of Blind Athletes

[www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org) American Printing House for the Blind: Check out new Cortical Visual Impairment page! Enter a search for ISAVE and download (or save to CD) ISAVE protocols.

<http://www.brailleink.org/> Children's print/Braille books formatted with print directly corresponding to Braille

AERizona View  
thanks Jacki  
Daniels, Penny  
Rosenblum, Patty  
Arnold, Ken Kalina,  
Christine Powers  
and Deb Herrmann  
for contributing to  
make our  
newsletter an  
ongoing success!  
You are  
appreciated!

*Kartar Kaur Khalsa*  
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### TO DO:

- ☞ *Register for  
the AZ AER  
Annual Fall  
Conference!!!*
- ☞ *Make your  
hotel  
reservation by  
the 10/16  
deadline!!!*
- ☞ *Nominate or  
support a  
nomination for  
the Bluhm  
Award!!!*
- ☞ *Consider  
running for the  
AZ AER Board!  
It's fun &  
rewarding!!!*

***“Do the best you can in every task, no matter  
how unimportant it may seem at the time. No  
one learns more about a problem than the  
person at the bottom.”***

*Soon-to-retire Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor of Arizona*



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